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C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 005448

SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: ITALIAN EU PRESIDENCY INSISTS IGC SECURITY ARCHITECTURES ARE NO THREAT TO TRANSATLANTIC RELATIONS; PREDICTS DOUBLE MAJORITY ISSUE WILL DETERMINE COUNCIL SUCCESS

REF: STATE 331930

CLASSIFIED BY: POL MINISTER COUNSELOR TOM COUNTRYMAN.

REASON: 1.5 (B)(D).

1. (C) ON DECEMBER 2, MFA OFFICE DIRECTOR FOR EU INSTITUTIONAL ISSUES, GIUSEPPE BUCCINO, TOLD POLOFF THAT THE ITALIAN EU PRESIDENCY, FM FRATTINI ESPECIALLY, WAS "VERY SATISFIED" WITH THE OUTCOME OF THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL CONFERENCE (IGC) "CONCLAVE" HELD IN NAPLES NOVEMBER 28-29. HE UNDERLINED THAT DISCUSSIONS ON EU SECURITY ARCHITECTURES WERE FAR FROM COMPLETE AND WOULD BE THE SUBJECT OF FURTHER DEBATE AND REFINEMENT AT THE DECEMBER 8-9 GAERC.

2. (C) BUCCINO ASSURED POLOFF THAT THE FINAL IGC DOCUMENT WOULD ENSHRINE THE PRINCIPLE OF UNANIMITY FOR OPERATIONAL DECISIONS REQUIRING USE OF FORCE. BUCCINO POINTED TO ARTICLES 40-5, III-210, AND III-211 OF THE DRAFT TREATY WHICH SPECIFY THAT ANY GROUP OF MEMBER STATES IN A "STRUCTURED COOPERATION" CONFIGURATION WOULD OPERATE WITHIN PARAMETERS AND ON SPECIFIC TASKS AGREED TO BY THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS ACTING UNANIMOUSLY. FURTHER, ANY CHANGE TO THOSE PARAMETERS WOULD REQUIRE AN ADDITIONAL COUNCIL DECISION. BUCCINO SAID THAT THE PRESIDENCY WOULD ENDEAVOR TO CROSS-REFERENCE THE ABOVE ARTICLES IN SECTIONS OF THE DRAFT DEALING WITH STRUCTURED COOPERATION TO HELP REMOVE ANY AMBIGUITY FROM THE LANGUAGE.

3. (C) BUCCINO SAID THAT THE ITALIAN PRESIDENCY'S GOAL OF COMPLETING THE IGC RESTED ON SOLVING THE QUALIFIED MAJORITY VOTING (QMV) ISSUE. THERE ARE OTHER AREAS OF CONTENTION - REFERENCE TO CHRISTIAN ROOTS IN THE PREAMBLE, COMMISSION MEMBERS AND MAKEUP, ROLE AND LINES OF AUTHORITY FOR THE "FOREIGN MINISTER" - BUT BUCCINO FEELS THESE WILL FALL INTO PLACE IF THE MEMBER STATES CAN AGREE ON THE FORMULA FOR QMV. SPAIN AND POLAND HAVE DUG IN TO PROTECT THEIR HARD-WON NICE EQUITIES, SAID BUCCINO. THE PRESIDENCY HAS BEEN WORKING HARD TO WIN OVER SMALLER AND NEW MEMBERS TO AN ACCEPTABLE QMV FORMULA, THEREBY ISOLATING SPAIN AND POLAND AND PLACING A POSSIBLE IGC FAILURE SQUARELY ON THEIR SHOULDERS. ITS A RISKY STRATEGY, BUCCINO ADMITTED, BUT HE SEES NO OTHER WAY FORWARD. LIKE-MINDED FMS WILL DISCUSS THIS ISSUE FURTHER WHEN THEY GATHER IN BRUSSELS FOR THE GAERC DECEMBER 8-9. THEY WILL ALSO TRY TO DETERMINE WHETHER THE DECEMBER 12-13 COUNCIL SHOULD FIRST ATTEMPT TO REACH CONSENSUS ON LESS CONTENTIOUS ISSUES, OR CONFRONT THE QMV DEAL-BREAKER UP FRONT. EITHER WAY, PREDICTED BUCCINO, THE TALKS WILL GO DOWN TO THE WIRE. HE WAS PREPARING TO REMAIN IN BRUSSELS WELL INTO SUNDAY EVENING DECEMBER 14.

SEMBLER

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